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FRANK CASTLE HAS BEEN TO HELL AND BACK. HE'S BEEN THE PUNISHER, A GHOST RIDER, A HERALD OF GALACTUS, THE BLACK RIGHT HAND OF THANOS AND EVEN (FOR A MINUTE) A GUARDIAN OF THE GALAXY. BUT NOW FRANK IS GETTING BACK TO HIS ROOTS, RIDING THROUGH THE COSMOS, SEEKING THOSE THAT DESERVE PUNISHMENT!

REVENGE OF THE COSMIC GHOST RIDER

PART 3 OF 5

FRANK CASTLE HAS ENLISTED CAMMI BENALLY, AN INNOCENT HUMAN, ON HIS CRUSADE AGAINST THE COSMIC KING! NOT ONE TO BE TOYED WITH, THE COSMIC KING SOUGHT OUT FRANK CASTLE'S SOUL—THE ONLY THING CAPABLE OF ENDING THE COSMIC GHOST RIDER.

THE TWO GALACTIC HEAVYWEIGHTS COLLIDED WHEN FRANK AND CAMMI ATTACKED ONE OF COSMIC KING'S DRUG OPERATIONS. HOWEVER, WHEN FRANK STOPPED CAMMI FROM KILLING ONE OF THE COSMIC KING'S OPERATIVES TO PRESERVE HER INNOCENT SOUL, THE COSMIC KING DISCOVERED ANOTHER WEAKNESS OF FRANK'S THAT HE COULD EXPLOIT—CAMMI!

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THEN.
I CAN'T RECALL MY LITTLE GIRL LISA'S FACE.
NOT REALLY. NOT ANYMORE.
TIME DOES TERRIBLE THINGS TO A MAN.
STEALS AWAY THE DETAILS. BIT BY BIT.
I'VE LIVED SO MANY LIFETIMES SINCE THAT GODFORSAKEN PARK.
THE DAY THAT MADE ME WHAT I AM. THAT SET ME ON THIS PATH.
MOST OF IT IS LONG GONE.
COULDN'T TELL YOU WHAT I WAS THINKING, HUNKERED BEHIND THAT TREE.
WAS IT EVEN A TREE?
I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT LISA WAS SCREAMING AT ME.
DYING AND DESPERATE. HER MOM AND BROTHER ALREADY GONE.
BUT I'LL NEVER EVER FORGET WHAT IT SOUNDED LIKE--
--WHEN HER SCREAMING STOPPED.

NOW.
DEAD, HOLLOW SILENCE.
LIKE THE VACUUM OF SPACE.
FRAAAANK!
NO! NO! NO!
HELLLLP!
MEEAAAGGHH!
OH, I'M SORRY. WAS THAT YOURS?
CAAAMMI!
MURDEROUS RAGE ISN'T HOT LIKE PEOPLE SAY.
IT'S ICE WATER.
POURING IN TO FILL THE VOID.

TOOOM
I'D FORGOTTEN THAT TOO.
UH-OH.
I'VE MADE HIM MAD.
THE COSMIC GHOST RIDER'S COMING TO GET ME.
WHATEVER WILL I DO?
YOU'LL BURN.
PROMISE?

EXERTING POWER IS FUN, ISN'T IT?
DESTROYING MY LITTLE EMPIRE, BIT BY BIT.
BECAUSE IT MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD.
BECAUSE YOU CAN.
NEVER ONCE CONSIDERING...
THOSE ARE THE SAME REASONS--
--I BUILT THE DAMNED THING TO BEGIN WITH.
RUUUUN!

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THEN.
UGH...
WHERE IN HELL AM I?
RIGHT NEAR THE MIDDLE.
PANDEMONIUM, TO BE EXACT.
BIG CITY ARCHITECTURE. SMALL TOWN TORTURE PITS.
AND YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE WHAT?
THE DEVIL?
A DEVIL ANYWAY.
MEPHISTO'S THE NAME.

NOBODY CALLS ME THE SOUL MAN, BUT THEY CERTAINLY SHOULD.
AND THE WAY I UNDERSTAND IT, YOU'RE LOOKING TO MAKE A DEAL FOR YOURS.
AM I?
FRANCIS "FRANK" CASTLE. CAUSE OF DEATH, MASSIVE BRAIN HEMORRHAGE FOLLOWING BLUNT FORCE TRAUMA.
LAST WORDS ON EARTH, AND I QUOTE, "I WOULD GIVE ANYTHING TO PUNISH THAT PURPLE SONOFABITCH..."
AS LAST WORDS GO, PRETTY ENTERTAINING. QUESTION IS, WHAT DID YOU MEAN--
--BY "ANYTHING"?
I DIDN'T SAY THAT OUT LOUD.
YES, WELL...
YOU'LL FIND MOST LAST WORDS GO UNSPOKEN. DEATH CAN BE RATHER DISTRACTING.
HUH...
YOU, SIR, ARE DELIGHTFULLY DIFFICULT TO IMPRESS.
LET ME LAY IT OUT. YOU'VE MURDERED SO MANY PEOPLE THAT THE WORLD GAVE YOU A SCARY NICKNAME.
STICK AROUND HERE AND THE TORTURE YOU'VE GOT COMING WILL BE SLOW AND DELIBERATE. CREATIVE EVEN. LIFETIMES OF UNIMAGINABLE PAIN.
BUT THERE IS ANOTHER OPTION.
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A SINGLE CHIP... LEFT...
...UNPLAYED.
GOOD GOD, MAN.
WHAT CHIP?
WHAT'RE YOU ON ABOUT?
YOUR LIFE, IT'S...
I DON'T KNOW IF I'VE EVER SEEN A MORTAL EXISTENCE SO...
$%@ DEPRESSING.
LISTEN, I'M SUPPOSED TO MAKE THIS OFFER. IT'S USUALLY A PRETTY GOOD ONE. RETURN TO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING AS THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE. SELL YOUR SOUL. GHOST RIDER... YADA, YADA, YADA.
BUT CONSIDERING YOUR LIFE ON EARTH. THE OBSESSION. THE LONELINESS.
I DUNNO, MAN. YOU MIGHT WANNA CHOOSE THE--
I'LL TAKE THE DEAL, DEMON.
NOW SHUT UP AND SEND ME BACK.

NOW.
THAT'S ONE KILLER SWING, SLUGGER.
ONLY BEEN HIT THAT HARD ONE OTHER TIME.
TAKES MORE THAN "KILLER" TO KILL ME THESE DAYS.
HEH. NOBODY'S TRYING TO KILL YOU, FRANK CASTLE.
'COURSE I WASN'T TRYING TO KILL THREE AND A HALF MILLION SQUALLERS JUST NOW EITHER.
AND LOOK HOW THAT TURNED OUT!
GAAAAH!
THE JEMONITES ARE INTELLECTUAL PEOPLE.
SCHOLARS. ARTISTS. POETS.
SO PRINCIPLED AND SELF-RIGHTEOUS. WOULDN'T GIVE AN INCH, EVEN TO ME. AND LOOK AT THEM NOW, LITTLE CLOUDS OF ASH BLOWING AROUND.
BECAUSE TWO MONSTERS DECIDED TO HAVE A FISTFIGHT.

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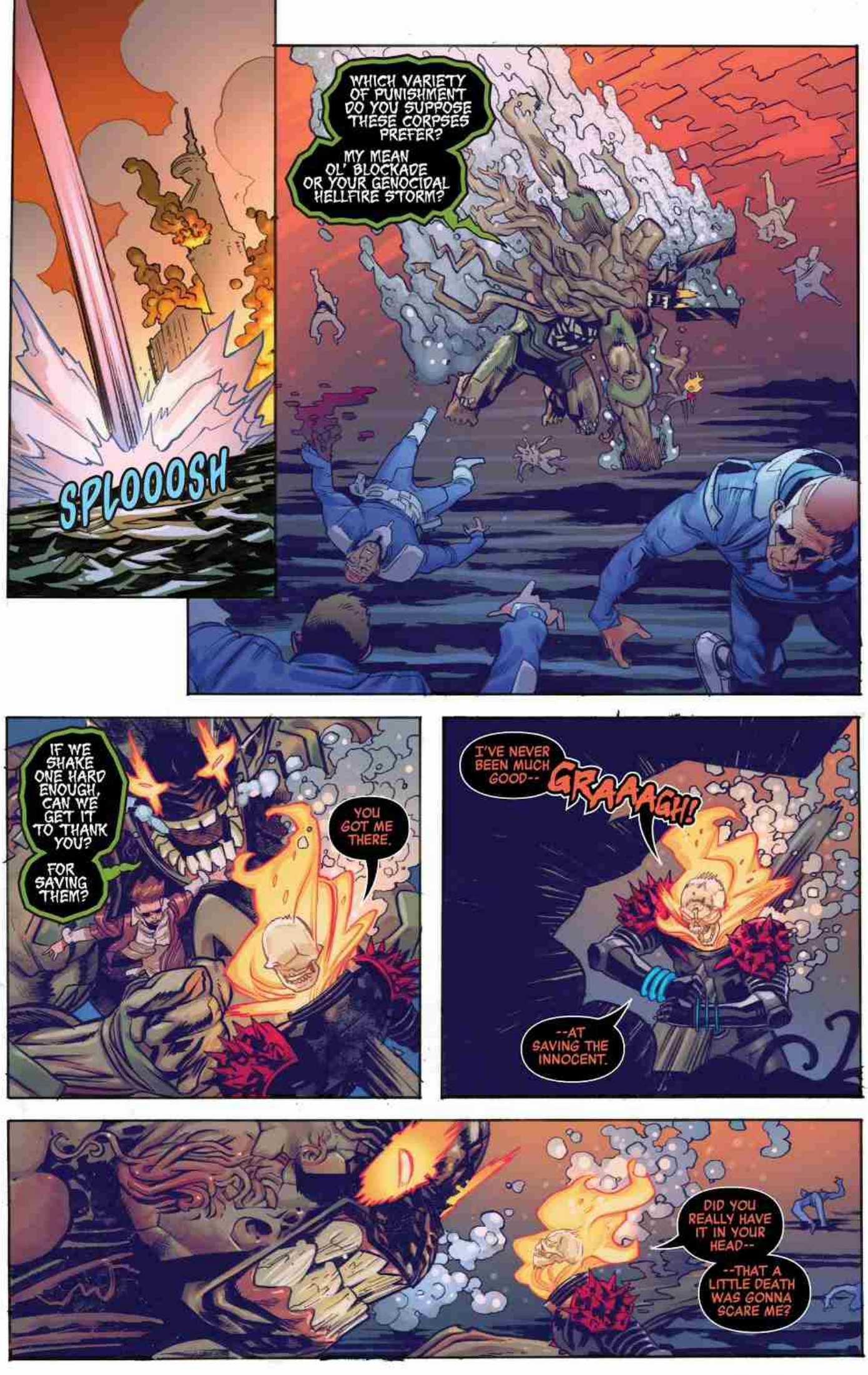
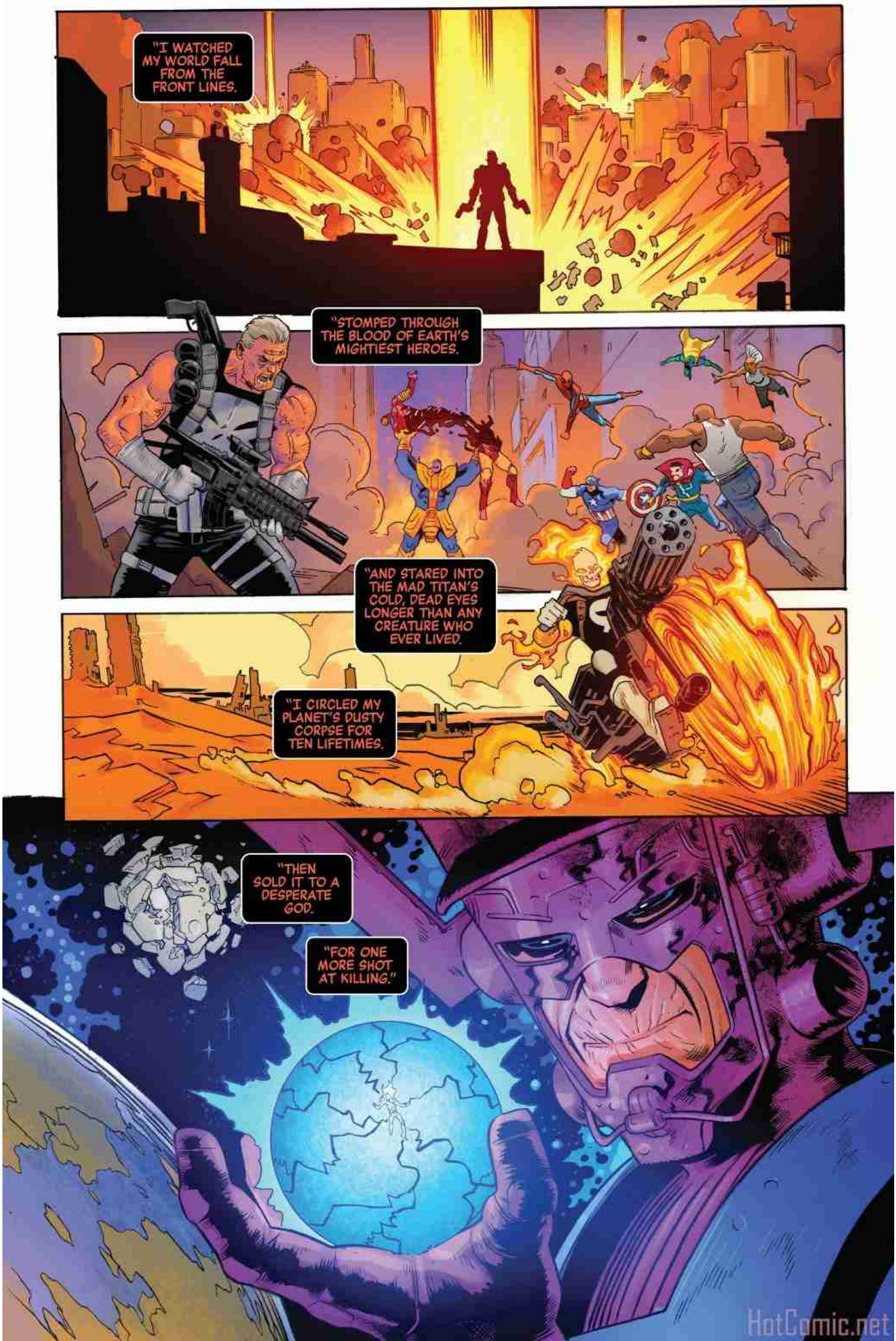

SPLOOOSH
WHICH VARIETY OF PUNISHMENT DO YOU SUPPOSE THESE CORPSES PREFER?
MY MEAN OL' BLOCKADE OR YOUR GENOCIDAL HELLFIRE STORM?
IF WE SHAKE ONE HARD ENOUGH, CAN WE GET IT TO THANK YOU?
FOR SAVING THEM?
YOU GOT ME THERE.
I'VE NEVER BEEN MUCH GOOD--
GRAAAGH!
--AT SAVING THE INNOCENT.
DID YOU REALLY HAVE IT IN YOUR HEAD--
--THAT A LITTLE DEATH WAS GONNA SCARE ME?

"I SPENT THREE NIGHTS ALONE IN THE JUNGLE.
"BEFORE I WAS EVEN OLD ENOUGH TO DRINK.
"BURIED TO THE WAIST IN THE WET REMAINS OF FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.
"YOU GET USED TO THE SMELL.
"IT'S THE MOSQUITOS THAT DRIVE YOU CRAZY.
"NEWSPAPER ONCE CALLED ME THE MOST PROLIFIC MASS MURDERER IN HUMAN HISTORY.
"BECAUSE I DID ALL OF MY KILLING WITHOUT THE AID OF AN ARMY...
"...OR A BOMB.


"I WATCHED MY WORLD FALL FROM THE FRONT LINES.
"STOMPED THROUGH THE BLOOD OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES.
"AND STARED INTO THE MAD TITAN'S COLD, DEAD EYES LONGER THAN ANY CREATURE WHO EVER LIVED.
"I CIRCLED MY PLANET'S DUSTY CORPSE FOR TEN LIFETIMES.
"THEN SOLD IT TO A DESPERATE GOD.
"FOR ONE MORE SHOT AT KILLING."
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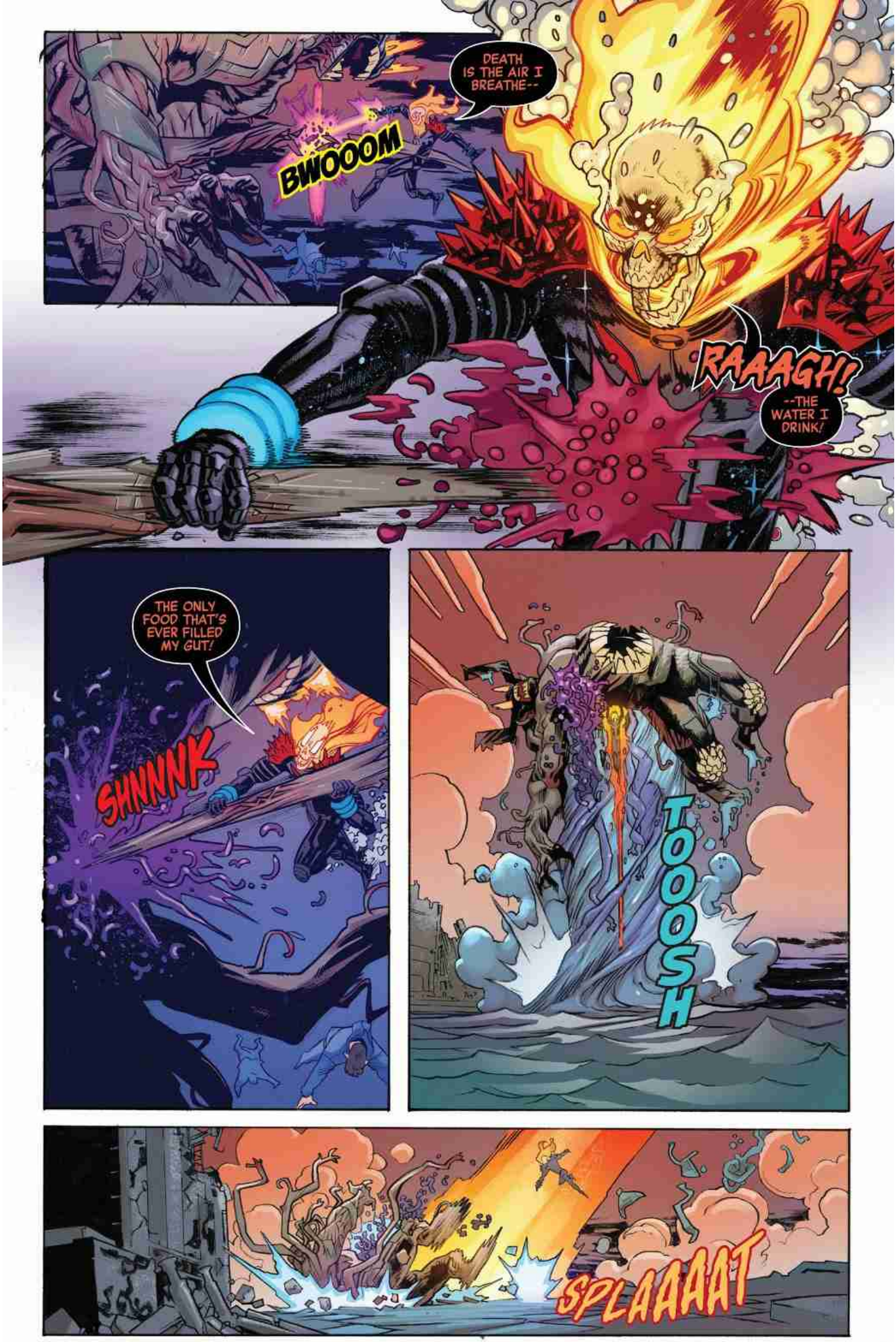
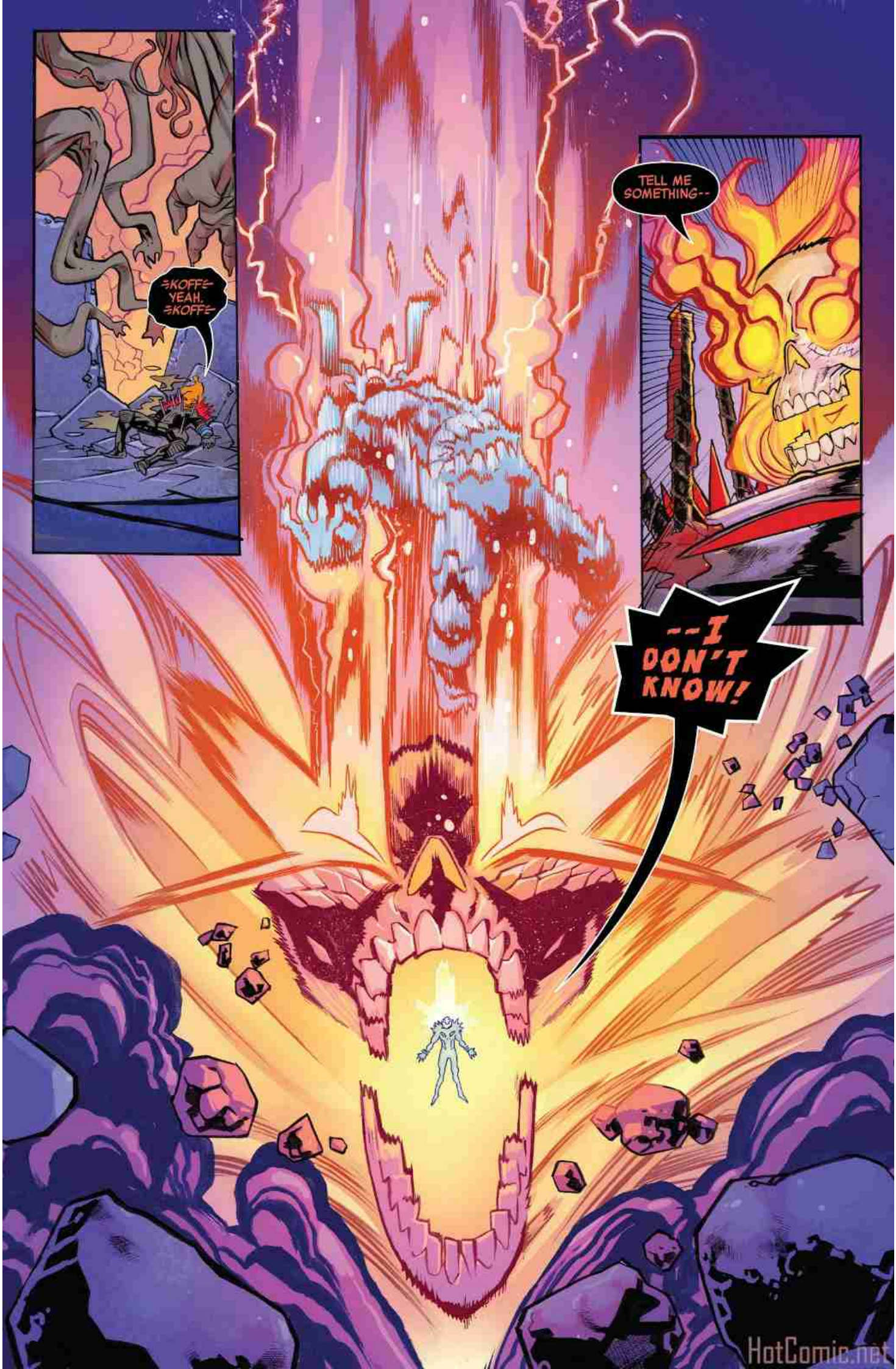

DEATH IS THE AIR I BREATHE--
BWOOOM
RAAAGH!
--THE WATER I DRINK!
THE ONLY FOOD THAT'S EVER FILLED MY GUT!
SHNNNK
TOOOSH
SPLAAAAT

SO PLEASE SPARE ME YOUR SCARY VILLAIN SPEECH.
YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AS SOME UNSTOPPABLE DEATH BRINGER.
BACK ATCHA, FRANK.
BUT WHEN I HEAR YOUR STORIES--
--WHAT STICKS WITH ME--
SPLAAT
--IS ALL THE FAILURE.

YOU COULDN'T WIN YOUR WAR.
OR SAVE YOUR FAMILY.
SPENT YOUR WHOLE LIFE FIGHTING CRIME.
ONLY TO WATCH IT RISE.

COULDN'T HELP YOUR HEROES.
OR SAVE YOUR PLANET.
AND THANOS?
WELL...
WE BOTH KNOW WHY THAT WALKING DEATH WISH LET YOU LOOK HIM IN THE EYES.
ONLY THING THAT EVER SURVIVES YOU--
--IS YOU.



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AND HOPE SOMEBODY PUTS YOU OUT OF YOUR MISERY--
--BEFORE YOU'VE DONE MORE HARM THAN GOOD.
I'M NOT TAKING YOU OUT TO SAVE THE GALAXY, COSMIC KING.

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AND BECAUSE WHAT THE HELL ELSE AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH ETERNITY?
NOW STOP SNIVELING AND TAKE THIS LIKE A MAN.
OKAY.
YOU WIN.
I HEAR YOU.
BUT WHAT IF THERE WAS A WAY... FOR ETERNITY TO END?
WHERE...
...DID YOU GET--
--MY SOUL?
RIGHT WHERE YOU LEFT IT.
AND IT'S YOURS AGAIN, ALONG WITH ALL THE PERKS.
PAIN. MORTALITY. DEATH.
TAKE IT.
MY LIFE FOR YOURS.

DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME TWICE.
HAHAHAHAHA!
COSMIC KING'S OVER THERE LAUGHING AT ME.
COULDN'T CARE LESS.
WHATEVER MURDEROUS THING HE'S GOT PLANNED--
AHEM.
PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU, FRANK.
--I WELCOME IT.
TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT: THE COSMIC GHOST RIDER HAS RETRIEVED HIS SOUL—BUT IS THE GALAXY PREPARED TO PAY THE PRICE?!

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #2
ON SALE NOW.

NEBULA #1
ON SALE NOW.

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